

The Random Jottings of Donald Jay from Nelson in Pendle..

St Mary's Church, Newchurch in Pendle, Lancashire

The small village of Newchurch in Pendle, Lancashire, was known for its quaint charm and its centuries-old St. Mary's Church. Nestled amidst rolling hills and surrounded by an air of mystery, the church held a rich history, with tales of witchcraft and paranormal activity woven into its very fabric.

One cold winter's night, as the year drew to a close, the village prepared for its annual Christmas celebrations. The villagers eagerly anticipated the festive gathering, a time when the community would come together to share warmth, laughter, and stories of old.

Amidst the excitement, a group of friends gathered at St. Mary's Church, their laughter echoing through the empty pews. The church stood tall and imposing, its age evident in its weathered stone walls and ancient architecture. Its western face bore a curious carving resembling an all-seeing "Eye of God," a symbol of divine presence and watchfulness.

As the day wore on, darkness enveloped the village, casting long shadows that danced in the pale moonlight. The church, usually a place of solace, took on an eerie ambiance under the shroud of night. The group, undeterred by the unsettling atmosphere, sat down to enjoy a late Christmas dinner.

The warmth of the gathering and the aroma of the feast filled the air, providing a stark contrast to the chilly surroundings. Candles flickered, casting eerie shadows on the stone walls as the conversation flowed. Stories of local legends and ghostly encounters were shared, adding to the electric atmosphere.

Amidst the tales, one local resident, known for her fascination with the paranormal, whispered about a recent ghostly sighting. She claimed to have captured a photograph of a black-eyed spirit, peering out from a gravestone with a deathly white face. The tale sent a shiver down the spines of those gathered, and curious eyes turned towards the speaker.

Intrigued, the friends begged her to share the photograph, and with trembling hands, she produced her phone. As the image materialized on the screen, a collective gasp echoed through the room. There, frozen in time, was the visage of a young girl with pale skin and haunting black eyes. Her gaze seemed to pierce the very souls of those who beheld her.

Silence enveloped the room as the weight of the photograph settled upon the group. Was this the restless spirit of a long-departed soul? Or perhaps an apparition bound to the church, forever trapped between realms? Fear mingled with curiosity, and each person grappled with their own emotions.

Suddenly, a gust of wind rattled the old windows, causing the candles to flicker and dance wildly. The room grew colder, and a sense of unease permeated the air. The group exchanged nervous glances, wondering if their presence had stirred something unseen.

Then, from the darkest corner of the church, a soft whisper emerged. It seemed to carry on the wind, barely audible yet undeniably present. The words echoed through the silence, chilling the bones of those who listened.

"Release me," the voice pleaded, a mournful cry from the beyond. "Release me from this eternal torment."

The friends, overcome with a mixture of fear and compassion, huddled together, seeking solace in their shared humanity. They whispered words of comfort, promising to seek answers and offer help to the tormented spirit.

As they made their way out of the church, their hearts heavy with the weight of what they had witnessed, they vowed to uncover the truth behind the ghostly apparition. Determined to bring

peace to the lost soul, they delved into the history of St. Mary's Church, seeking clues that would unlock the mystery.

Little did they know that their journey would lead them down a path lined with forgotten secrets, ancient curses, and the lingering echoes of the witch trials that had plagued Pendle centuries ago.

The spirit's plea for release would unravel a tale of darkness and redemption, forever etching its mark upon the souls of those brave enough to face the shadows that haunted St. Mary's Church in Newchurch.

Donald Jay.